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OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

MEMORANDUM FOR STATE-DEFENSE CONSULTANTS

SUBJECT: Guidance on Psychological Warfare and Covert Operations for Joint Chiefs of Staff

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
NO. 100-100000-5
X
2011
DATE: 10/10/50
BY: [redacted]

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The Problem - To furnish the Joint Chiefs of Staff with basic policies and decisions bearing on foreign information, psychological warfare and covert operations upon which to base guidance in these matters for the United States Military Representatives to the Standing Group, North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

Discussion - In a memorandum to the Secretary of Defense of 16 February 1950, "Guidance on Psychological Warfare Matters," the Joint Chiefs of Staff state:

"The strategic concept for the defense of the North Atlantic Area, as approved by the Atlantic Defense Committee on 1 December 1949, provides that as a prerequisite to the military implementation of common plans, measures must be undertaken in advance for 'cooperation, insofar as is practicable, in preparing for the conduct of psychological and other special operations.'

"In a memorandum for the Joint Chiefs of Staff, dated 15 November 1949, the U. S. Military Representative to the Standing Group (SG), North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), requested immediate guidance on psychological warfare matters. This request for guidance is the result of a proposal from the French Representative that this problem be considered by the Standing Group. The French proposal suggests that the question of guidance for the planning in this delicate field should initially be restricted to the French, British, and American. No British position on this matter is indicated in the memorandum by the U. S. Military Representative, Standing Group, for the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The U. S. Military Representative indicated, in his memorandum, that his use of the term 'psychological warfare' was intended to include not only informational activities but also special operations both in peace and war, such as underground operations and the employment of agents in enemy territory.

OSD REVIEW COMPLETE
The Joint Chiefs of Staff, recognizing that important peacetime responsibilities for psychological warfare and covert operations lie outside the Department of Defense, are of the opinion that they should have statements of policy on these matters prior to furnishing their guidance to the U. S. Military Representative."

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A copy of a memorandum which was furnished by the French Delegation to the Standing Group and which somewhat clarifies the French suggestions is attached as Tab "A". The memorandum differentiates between the political aspects of "psychological warfare," which is a responsibility of the respective governments, and military aspects, the provision for which is a responsibility of the Standing Group.

The responsibilities for the conduct of foreign information and planning for psychological warfare in all periods from peace to war, through emergencies or the initial stages of war, are clearly covered for all participating departments or agencies in NSC-59.

The responsibilities of the Central Intelligence Agency for covert operations and the functions of cooperating agencies are covered in NSC-10/2.

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It is recognized that in the circumstances the Joint Chiefs of Staff are not in position to give guidance to the United States Representative to the Standing Group without having as a basis for their instructions the agreed views and position of the Secretaries of State and Defense with the advice of the Director, Central Intelligence Agency.

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Conclusion - That a paper should be prepared by the Consultants, in collaboration with representatives of Central Intelligence Agency, for the consideration of the Secretaries of Defense and State to serve as a basis for the Joint Chiefs of Staff in giving guidance to the United States Representative to the Standing Group, North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

Recommendation - That the following draft be adopted:

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APPENDIX

FRENCH DELEGATION
TO THE
STANDING GROUP

TRANSLATION

WORKING TEAM

MEMORANDUM

I. As a follow-up to the ideas which were propounded at the meeting of 2 November, it would appear useful to clarify the following points:

II. "Psychological Warfare", actually known as the "cold war" is nothing else but a new strategic form of warfare itself. It is made full use of, and improved upon daily by the USSR. It is capable of producing important results (example Czechoslovakia).

III. The action to be taken against this form of warfare is essentially within the province of Governments.

IV. But the cold war also has its direct projection into classical warfare, by the way in which its fifth columns and agents of all sorts create disorganization in the rear of Armies. The importance of such actions, if well organized, may be considerable.

V. In view of the disproportion existing between the defensive means of the Pact Nations, and the forces of their eventual aggressor, we are in duty bound not to neglect this aspect of the problem. We have there a method of combating the enemy with his own weapons, and capable of partly reestablishing the balance of forces.

VI. It is, however, not possible to improvise such an action. It must be minutely organized long in advance and in complete secrecy.

It is a Government problem. The Government must set the policy to be followed and the objectives to be attained.

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Appendix

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But this problem also has military aspects: studies of zones favorable to the employment of such action, study of the organization to be set up; procurement, screening, instruction and delivery of the personnel, etc.

VII. It is probable that certain countries have already initiated a draft of action to be taken in this field. On the other hand it is certain that this subject is far too delicate to be taken into account by Committees on which the twelve Powers are represented.

It would be useful, however, to insist on the necessity of not losing sight of this type of problem, as well as to organize, as far as possible, a certain convergence of efforts, which would considerably increase their efficiency.

VIII. If all the Members of the Permanent Team are agreed on this manner of presenting the problem, then the solution remains to be found.

The "Strategic Directives to the Regional Groups", which are in the making, can and should insist on the importance of this type of question. It would not appear possible to do more. The setting up of convergence of efforts is a difficult problem, possibly without solution. But, a chance, however small, of doing something which could produce results, should not be allowed to escape.

For this reason, it is suggested that the Members of the Permanent Team bring thought to bear on this problem, and attempt to solve it.

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Appendix

.1 Mar 50

Admiral [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] delivered the attached paper handed to him by [REDACTED] OSD. Mr. Wisner has a copy - so do the appropriate people in State. This subject is to be considered at the next Tuesday meeting at State. The points to be discussed are: Who is to do what portion of the paper.

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